

# Ames Historical Society

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## Newsletter to Members 2009 FALL..... ISSUE #3/4

*The mission of the Ames Historical Society is to preserve local history and illuminate its stories.*



*Tom and George Constantine owned two eateries in Ames called The Rainbow Coffee shop, one on Main Street, one on 5th Street.*

### Ames Historical Society Board:

**President** Kathy Svec  
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*The Board meets the 1st Thursday of each month at City Hall at 6:45pm. Members welcome!*

**Administrator** Alan Spohnheimer  
**Staff** Sara Vouthilak, Dennis Wendell

Ames Historical Society is an incorporated, 501c3 not-for-profit organization dedicated to promoting interest in state and local history through publications, programs, exhibitions and operation of an archive and historic site.

**Headqtrs:** 416 Douglas, Ames, IA 50010  
Open Wed-Fri, 1-5pm  
**Mail:** PO Box 821, Ames, IA 50010  
**Phone:** 515-232- 2148  
**E-mail:** AmesHistorical@qwest.net  
**Website:** www.AmesHistoricalSociety.org

The newsletter is published four times a year for AHS members. Direct comments and questions to: Editor, PO Box 821, Ames, IA 50010 or e-mail above.

Hoggatt School is located on the grounds of Meeker School, near 18<sup>th</sup> and Burnett, Ames, IA. Open April 1 through October 31.

## Make It A Habit - Meet Your Friends Here: The Rainbow Coffee Shop

*By Kathy Svec, Ames Historical Society newsletter editor*

An October 3, 1950 article in the Ames Tribune by Bernie Kooser, started out this way, "It was 1943 and a typical California day. The smog was rolling in and the Chamber of Commerce of California was putting out thousands of brochures telling of the famous California sunshine.

In a hotel room in Sacramento, two mid-westerners were contemplating closing a deal for the opening of a restaurant. One looked at the other and said, "I don't know about you, but I'm homesick for Iowa and I'm going back. You coming with me?" It wasn't long before both were headed to the tall corn state. Thus, Ames can thank a case of homesickness for one of the finest restaurants in this part of the country."

Those two mid-westerners in Sacramento were Tom and George Constantine.

The two brothers came to this country from Pyrgos, Greece. Tom, the older of the two, made the trip in 1912. He landed here and found that Americans had a fondness for candy. He apprenticed to a candy-maker, learning the trade in Boston, New York City and Philadelphia before coming to the mid-west.

He eventually located in Sioux City where he had friends. Two years later, George made the trip, bypassing the big eastern cities and coming straight to Sioux City. He quickly landed a job in a restaurant as a dishwasher.

In 1916, after four years of diligent saving, they opened their own candy kitchen in Oskaloosa. About this time, Tom was drafted to serve in the Army and spent two years in the service, part of which was spent in France with the American Expeditionary Force.

After returning home, Tom and George opened the Royal Candy Kitchen in Pella, IA, then went to Des Moines for a similar venture.

The two came to Ames in 1934, and partnered with John Zantias in opening the Rainbow Coffee Shop at the corner of Main and Kellogg, just across Kellogg from the Sheldon-Munn Hotel. The three ran the business together until 1937, when Tom and George took over. The Rainbow proved to be a popular gathering place and eating house for Iowa State students and townspeople alike. But in 1948, tired from battling food shortages during World War II, they closed up shop.



The two spent several months relaxing, playing golf and hunting but began to get the urge to get back in business again. California looked good to them.

“We came close to opening a place out there,” George says, “but an hour or so before the deal was closed, I finally decided I was homesick. Tom decided he was, too, and we headed to Ames.”

On the way back, they made the decision to put their money into a new restaurant in Ames. They thought it would help the city and make it a better place.



They had their troubles in getting the new place underway, however.

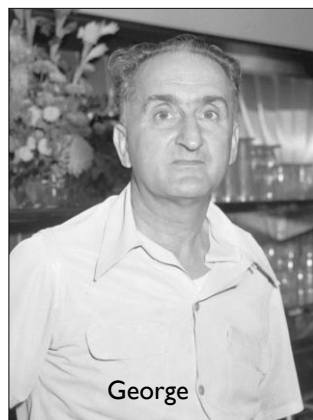
Construction was started in September but a steel strike delayed progress. The Rainbow, which should have opened in April, didn't open until September. But when it finally opened its doors, it was all new – the building, the location, the fixtures and the equipment.



Local craftsmen provided the neon sign, light fixtures, heating and cooling and a terrazzo floor.

The restaurant featured coffee, short orders, fountain service, dinners, soft drinks, broiled steaks and home made ice cream. Their opening day special offered a dinner consisting of cream of celery soup, roast turkey, candied yams, creamed cauliflower, pineapple-cottage cheese salad, hot rolls, coffee and dessert - - all for just 75¢!

Send us your memories of the Rainbow!



A large ad in the paper boasted that the new place was “more beautiful than ever” and urged readers to “Make it a habit – meet or bring your friends to the Rainbow.” Tom and George pledged that, “Your complete satisfaction and comfort is our greatest desire.”

The Rainbow was also a popular place for Ames High School students, who found the spot a convenient two-block walk from the school at 5<sup>th</sup> and Clark. Our current Ames City Hall now occupies the former school building at 515 Clark, but during the Rainbow's era, it was one of a number of downtown businesses that enjoyed the patronage of teenagers. After-school malts, shakes and cherry cokes were in demand and the Constantines were only too happy to oblige.

In this 1953 picture, Tom and George are hosting the Iowa State football squad and coaches.



The Rainbow served customers until 1968. The building was later remodeled into a one-story structure.



In this picture, the sign for the first Rainbow Coffee Shop is still on the wall of the old location, newly remodeled for the Smart and Thrifty. This image is from October 1949, when the new location on 5th Street was being readied for the 1950 grand opening.

# Donations, Visitors and Programs

## Paper Thanks!

Our last newsletter suggested ways that members can help the Society's day-to-day operations – one of which was donating paper products. We thank and recognize Elmer Aurand and Dan Konrady, both from Ames, for doing just that! This helps us channel our resources to our primary mission – sharing local history!

## Sharing History, Part 1

Loyal Society volunteer, Jim Menzel, stopped by Society headquarters in July in his shiny 1951 Studebaker. He had just returned from helping host the International Studebaker Meet in Cedar Rapids, IA.



## Sharing History, Part 2

Doug Samson, owner of Main Street's Hobby Shop and a 1961 Ames High graduate, asked if we could use a few 1964 Community History Books. Evidently, the Ames Centennial Committee met upstairs at the Hobby Shop. When Doug took over the building, he inherited 232 new copies of the Ames Centennial book! Museum Assistant, Sara Vouthilak picked up seven boxes. The books are for sale in the Museum Shop for just \$6. This is the only book written to date that presents Ames history in chronological order.



## Assisting an ISU PhD Student



In late July, the Society was visited by Angie Gumm, a Kansas native working on her doctoral thesis at Iowa State. She is writing about three resource recovery plants. She found useful information in our archives, specifically in former city publicist Ellen Landon's

City of Ames scrapbooks. A plant in St. Louis was the first of the kind, but is no longer in operation. Baltimore spent millions of dollars on theirs, but it also is no longer working. Ames is special for overcoming obstacles and misperceptions to be the only one still working. Angie won a 2008 State Historical Society of Iowa research grant for her project, *The Ames Anomaly: How 'A Little City with Big Ideas' Came to Have the Most Enduring Waste-to-Energy Plant in the Country.*

## We Enjoyed Getting the Call

Society member, John Bath made the effort to call in late July to say he enjoyed reading the newsletter featuring Kampus Kamp. We like getting calls like this!

## Myths, Legends and Lore

Society Administrator, Alan Spohnheimer, reported on a special event on July 27:

"Monday we hosted 21 students aged 6 to 11 and five parents/instructors from the Octagon Center for the Arts Summer Camp, *Once Upon a Time - Myths, Legends and Lore*. The kids were divided into three groups that each came across the street for a 20 to 30 minute visit. I showed them diaries, journals, films, songs and other items from our collections, and spoke of several Ames legends (one true and one we had debunked). I invited the kids back to hear other stories and several actually came back with their parents. We received a donation from one dad."



Octagon Education Director, Beth Weninger, wrote this note, "Many thanks for your support of our programs. With your help during our July art camp, we were able to enhance the educational component for the campers. Your presentations were very well received by each child and our staff. Parents were thrilled! Thank you being great neighbors."

## A Hunt for Doors

Alan continues with another story, "In late July, Sally Clayton and her daughter, Brooke, came in just as member, Janet Klaas asked for her "Doors of Ames" poster. Pauline Gibbs Williams also came for hers that morning and suggested we have a contest to see who could identify all those porches and doors.

Sally and her daughter were interested in the posters, so I decided to give them one. They returned the next day with a list of all the houses but one identified by address! They were excited to show us their accomplishment! (And we were pleased to learn each door's identity.) Sally even paid for a sustaining membership before they left. Sometimes, activities that we doubt are a good fit for us, still end up serving our mission!" (see picture, last page)

## Letters From the In-Box

### Meeting Ben

This interesting e-mail correspondence took place last summer: "My name is Florence Kaplow. I have been working on a web site to honor my husband, Benjamin M. Kaplow, and his WWII experiences. He passed away March 23, 2007. In our 53 years of marriage, I never read the (192) letters that are scanned and posted on this site. He never spoke about the war with me. I would like your permission to link Ben's website to yours for the historical background during that period (on wartime rationing).



You were kind to let me tell you about Ben. Now you can meet him when he was 18-21 years of age, years before I knew him. Though Ben's web site is finally published, it's a work in progress. Some letters have yet to be posted. Students working on the project will continue when they return to school.

Feel free to tell others to take a look. It is a huge site.

The best way to view it is like reading a book over a period of time. By going from Next Letter to Next Letter, the viewer will also come across videos that are not included in the topics pages. I would be interested to hear comments (click "Contact Us" on the first page). I've had viewers from Germany and Australia!

Here's the link: <http://www.benkaplow.com>. Once there, you will find the Ames Historical Society link on the July 21, 1943 letter.

In response, Administrator, Alan, wrote: "Hi, Florence. Because our website is intended to be educational in nature, we allow folks to link to it. I often trace where visitors to our website come from, so I have already seen portions of your website and have visited it several times. It is an amazing collection of experiences and is a great tribute to you husband. I enjoyed reading the "actual" letters instead of reading transcriptions. It brings us a step closer to actually being there.

"We are working on several WW2 related projects, too. We've just made available a film taken by a B-17 ball turret gunner who was from our community. The film has been converted to DVD format so it can be easily viewed. We just were awarded a grant that will eventually allow the public access to records we have of

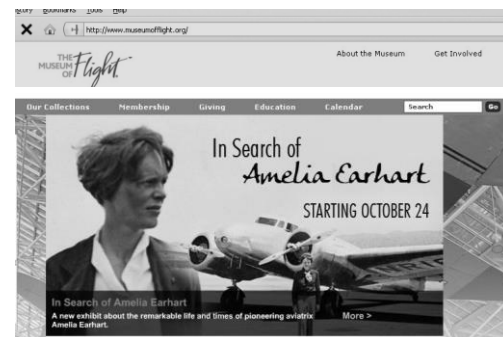
all WWII veterans in our county. Most of these clippings and photos haven't been viewed in the last 60 years. Your husband's letters may be of interest to our members and web visitors."

Florence responded, "Oh, Alan, You've just brought tears to my eyes. You've watched me on my journey with Ben. Thank you so much. When I collect my thoughts, I'll write back again. You are very special to me." Later, she wrote, "I was composed last night but then as I started to write to you today, I noticed something. The date of Ben's letter where I linked to your site was July 21, 1943, and now today is July 21, 2009 - exactly 66 years later. So, I'm back to tears!"

### Request from French Embassy

This note was received from Thomas Rottcher, Managing Editor, News from France, Embassy of France, Washington, DC. "We are writing an article about the Friendship Train and we would like to obtain a picture from you to accompany it. Our publication is an English-language newsletter covering French news and trends. We would be very grateful if you could send us a relevant picture of the boxcars, ideally ones that say "Friendship Train." We would credit the photo to your organization and would be happy to send you a copy of the issue for your records." (We were happy to oblige!) *The Friendship Train was a 1947 relief effort by Americans for destitute and drought-stricken French and Italian citizens still reeling from WWII. Each state participated; 700 boxcars were filled and shipped to Europe. In less than 2 weeks, Iowa filled 22 boxcars – more than any other state.*

### Request from Seattle Museum



*This September, a request was received from Seattle's Museum of*

*Flight to use several images from our collection. They were preparing for an upcoming exhibit on Amelia Earhart. Their staff found us during an online inquiry, searching for information on Earhart. Ames is connected to the famous flyer because the young woman pilot who taught her to fly, Neta Snook, grew up in Ames. The exhibit will credit Ames Historical Society for our contribution.*

## Don Faas: A Remembrance



Long-time Society member and local history buff, Don Faas, passed away on July 28. Don volunteered his skills to the Society in a number of ways – he wrote articles for the newsletter, presented programs, was a Board member and served as caretaker for Hoggatt School. But he was best known for his large collection of historic items, many of which had a direct connection to Ames and Iowa State. He was generous in loaning these items for display.



He had an extensive collection of antique glass medicine and beverage bottles with Ames and Iowa imprints, all well researched and neatly displayed on special shelving in his home. Eager to share these treasures, he would don a bowler hat and present his “Medicine Man Show” as a way to teach and entertain. He had also gathered a number of locally-designed stuffed animals created by Collegiate Manufacturing of Ames.

But his interests didn't stop there. He delighted in all sorts of intriguing old “stuff” and eventually developed a program called “Whatchmacallits and Thingamajigs” that he presented to all kinds of audiences. Don loved doing research on the things he gathered, and his ability to tell good stories about those objects provided many hours of entertainment to young and old alike.

Don's delight and enthusiasm was absolutely infectious, and it was impossible to come away from one of his talks without a big smile on your face and some new, interesting facts tucked in your memory.

Don was a long-time shop teacher at Ames High School and many of his former students remember him fondly, too. He will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

## Ames Historical Society News

### News About Hoggatt School

Hoggatt School has had an active 2009 season under the direction of curator, Carol Alexander Phillips. Through August 29, the little school hosted 257 visitors during regular open hours and on arranged tours. Her special Game Days (below) attracted parent/child teams who participated in Civil War-era games, such as button who's got the button and three-legged races. Regular open hours are over for the summer, but arranged visits can be made through October 31 by calling Carol at 515-232-0595.



The Hoggatt School Maintenance Committee employed an expert to add vents that will improve air circulation to the school's foundation. Additional planned repairs involve the front steps and door. The Society is eager to preserve this structure for many years to come.

Curator Phillips is researching to develop a reference notebook and props kit for teachers to provide their students with an 1860s school re-enactment experience. She has assembled an array of reference materials to aid her and is searching for a key group of volunteers who would like to help with school visits.

### Worldly Goods Benefit Night Set

Please join us on:

**Sunday, November 1, from 1 to 4pm**  
at Worldly Goods, 223 Main Street, Ames.

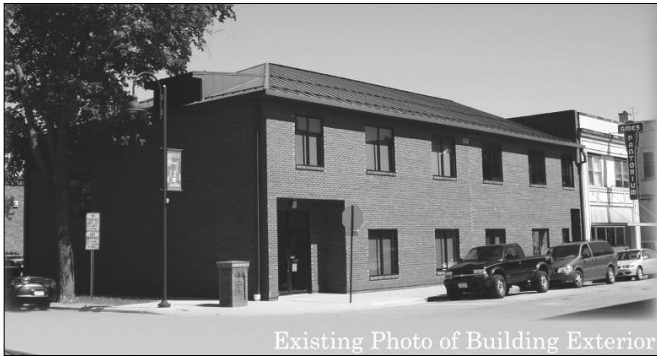
Worldly Goods will donate a portion of sales on Nov. 1st to the Ames Historical Society. The store features Fair Trade hand-crafted items from around the globe. Last year, nearly \$200 was donated to The Society, thanks to inspired shoppers! Purchases at Worldly Goods give three times - once to the recipient, once to the global artisans whose wares are sold and once to support the Society.

Refreshments will be provided, including Fair Trade beverages such as cocoa, coffee and tea.





## Legacy Ames Update



Existing Photo of Building Exterior

### Progress on Building Payments

After the Society made a substantial payment in December 2008 on its building at 416 Douglas, the balance due on the principal was \$178,000. A three-year contract at 2% interest was written for this amount.

In May 2009, an additional \$30,000 payment was made over-and-above monthly contract payments that are \$658. As of October 1, the balance has been reduced to \$144,229, with over \$34,000 paid from January to September 2009.

The Legacy Ames Building Fund has continued to accumulate funds, thanks to generous donors. The balance in the fund as of Sept. 25th is \$47,798. Monthly contract payments are being deducted from this fund.

The sale of the Bert and Mary Adams home in north Ames has now been postponed to spring of 2010. Delays caused by a number of required approvals have led the City of Ames Parks and Recreation Department to postpone the sale to avoid showing the property during the winter. The City intends to gift the proceeds of the sale to the Building Fund.

### Facility Committee Report

The Society currently occupies half of the first floor of the building. The Facility Committee met to answer the important question, "When will we be able to take over occupancy of the whole building?"

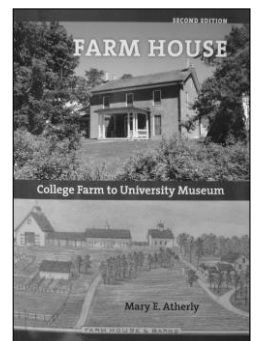
After doing a number of calculations, the committee determined that the Society needs to increase its revenue by at least \$25,000 annually in order to make this move. Until that time, we will continue the current arrangement. Revenue increases will result from an increased number of members and regular donations, and growth in our Operations Endowment. Unfortunately, our small Endowment has been badly hit by the recession; it stands currently at \$18,701. An active membership campaign is underway.

## Museum Shop News

The Museum Shop continues to offer a unique selection of books, cards, postcards, toys and other accessories that feature historical themes.



Featured in the picture are sewing cards, a cat's cradle kit, unusual card games, slates and slate pencils, cup & ball toys and clickers similar to those carried by soldiers during World War II.



The Shop also has a supply of the second edition of Mary Atherly's history of ISU's Farm House.

### Spohnheimer Honored

On September 20, the Society's Administrator was recognized by Iowa State University with a Music Department Service Award. We are very proud of Alan! Here are excerpts from remarks read by Mike Golemo:

"Alan graduated from the ISU Music Department in 1972 with a Bachelor's in Music Education. A year later, he accepted a position as instrumental music director at South Hamilton School (west of Ames) where he worked for over thirty years as an outstanding teacher and conductor. After leaving South Hamilton, he was hired as Webmaster and Administrator of the Ames Historical Society.

"Alan is an active member of the Department of Music Advisory Committee. After joining the Musica Antiqua ensemble in 1967 he became a specialist in playing medieval and renaissance music. He is one of the ensemble's most versatile performers, playing all of the group's various string, wind and percussion instruments. He is also Antiqua's historian, expert on its instrument holdings and webmaster. Alan designed Antiqua's website [www.music.iastate.edu/antiqua/](http://www.music.iastate.edu/antiqua/) that ranks number one in Google sites worldwide concerned with medieval and renaissance music ensembles. This site claims thousands of links to it and many thousands of hits each year."

# Curator's Report by Dennis Wendell

## Highlights of Collections Donations, June through August 2009

### SCHOOLS & EDUCATION COLLECTION

**school books:** McGuffey readers, Harper's reader, Model arithmetics, Geography for beginners, 1931, New Geographies, first book, 1916

**handbook:** Ames Senior High School, 1946

**desk:** child's folding chalk board and writing desk with educational scroll

### PAPER ITEMS



**popular sheet music:** 1910s & 1920s (left)

**coupon money:** Bledsoe's Boyshop Buck, ten dollar denomination, from the

former Main Street clothier

**trading stamp books:** Regal Stamps from Ames Hy-Vee grocery store, 1960s

**stereographs:** Rosendal (Jul. 31, 1889); Holvek (Aug. 2, 1889) by Martin Morrison, Norway

**real picture postcard:** downtown & campus, 1940s

**photos:** Gentle Doctor, Friley Hall, Veishea horse, 1941

**time-table:** Chicago & Northwestern Line, 1937, 63 p.

### REFERENCE MATERIALS

**books:** *Iowa's historic architects: a biographical dictionary* / Wesley Shank, 1999; *Country roads of Iowa; Iowa, off the beaten path*; *Christmas in Iowa*; *For the people's health: 100 year history of Iowa Methodist Medical Center*, 2001

**plat book:** Story County; Farm drainage plat, 1929

**records:** Story County Civil Defense sites file

**atlases:** *Story County soil survey*, 1941; *Souvenir atlas of Story County*, 1908?

**directory:** *Directory of Story County*, 1914

**ledgers:** Story County Chattel Mortgage Records, 1894-1960s, 68 volumes

*Chattel Mortgage Records from the Story County Recorder's office. Each ledger weighs from 18 to 50 pounds! Scouts visiting recently thought it was "cool" to feel the tooled-leather covers and leaf through the hand-written pages. Found was confirmation in an 1894 ledger for Eighmey, an early Norwegian cigar manufacturer in Ames. This enabled us to date his cigar box.*

### PERSONAL HISTORIES

**recollection** by Mary Martin Carr: nursing experiences; also nurse's caps, *New Testament* given to nursing students, name pin: "Miss Martin"

**recollection** by Don McNeill: "Some World War II era memories in Ames, Iowa" (35 pages)

#### *Early African-American Families.*

*Several Martin family members have assisted in compiling an outline of "Early African-American Families in Ames, 1900 to 1950," tracing the lineage of eighteen families. One outcome has been the donation of nurse's uniforms worn by several Martin sisters and World War I memorabilia of Paul E. Martin (their father) including photos, his honorable discharge and bronze Croix de Guerre medal. These materials document this oldest and most prominent African-American family in Ames.*

#### *Recollections.*

*Former resident, Donald H. McNeil, has written an extensive, 35-page recollection of growing up in Ames during the World War II era. His uncanny memory and unique brand of humor has produced what we consider the "gold standard" for personal recollections. We encourage all persons to record their memories to share with us.*

### OTHER ARTIFACTS



**model**

**airplane:**

Curtiss Jenny ca. 1918 (similar to Ames aviatrix, Neta Snook's Canuck airplane)

**DVD:** 16mm film of footage shot from the

ball turret of a WWII bomber by Bill Carter, Ames

**tool holder:** Edwards Coal Co.

**mug, glass:** Dog 'n' Suds

**sign:** Litzel Lumber & Hardware

**triple pulley block:** from Cole Construction, builders of the Grand Avenue underpass

*We were delighted to become the home for these items from the long-time Campustown business:*

#### **Fred's Barber Shop memorabilia** (Fred Watne):

barber chair, adjustable chair, sandwich board: "Fred's Shop- Upstairs-Walk-ins Welcome", guitar, hanging sign: "Fred's Shop" painted by Jo Magnani (1987), T-shirt: tie-dyed, saying "Mayor of Campustown", barber cloth: "Betty Dain Creations", framed photo: Rastafarian framed by Love's Matting & Framing, Ames



We continue to offer a **FREE** full-color, fine art poster to current members as long as supplies last. Jacquelyn Olson's *Historic Homes of Ames* measures 16 x 20".

Stop by Society Headquarters at 416 Douglas, for your copy!



On page 3 is the story of Sally and Brooke Clayton's inspired search to identify all the homes featured in the poster! The two had a wonderful time solving the mystery of the poster and we have enjoyed knowing which homes were featured! Perhaps one of our readers can identify the one home they could not find (Row 1, #2).

Starting at the top, left to right, homes featured are.

ROW 1: 721 Clark, unidentified as yet, 928 Burnett, 903 Burnett, 829 Douglas; ROW 2: 907 Burnett, 714 Douglas, 703 Duff, 816 Duff, 804 Duff; ROW 3: 508 Carroll, 807 Douglas, 918 Burnett, 522 Carroll, 512 Carroll; ROW 4: 803 Burnett, 809 Burnett, 803 Duff, 712 Duff, 904 Clark; ROW 5: 915 Douglas, 906 Clark, 709 Duff, 823 Douglas, 904 Clark; ROW 6: 811 Duff, 709 Douglas, 722 Douglas, 726 Duff, 911 Douglas

## Renew Your Membership Now for 2009

Renewals are due on the 1 year anniversary of last year's payment. See the newsletter label for information about your membership.

<b>Introductory - 1st year</b>	<b>\$10</b>	<b>Sustaining</b>	<b>\$100</b>
<b>Individual</b>	<b>\$25</b>	<b>Benefactor</b>	<b>\$500</b>
<b>Family</b>	<b>\$40</b>	<b>Patron</b>	<b>\$1,000</b>
<b>Friend</b>	<b>\$50</b>		

### Additional amount for:

Building Fund \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Operations Endowment \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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